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GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) with Bangladesh

Union Home Minister has said that the Northeast States will be linked by road and railway to Bangladesh in a year or two under the historic Land Boundary Agreement (LBA).

Land Boundary Agreement (LBA)

- India and Bangladesh have signed the LBA in 2014 to ensure proper connectivity in the region.
- The operationalization of LBA lays the way for the exchange of 162 enclaves under the control of either country as per the 1974 pact.
- Under the Agreement, 111 border enclaves will be transferred to Bangladesh in exchange for 51 that will become part of India.
- The agreement settles an old land boundary dispute which dates back to colonial times as India transfers 111 border enclaves to Bangladesh in exchange for 51 enclaves.
- It also settles the question of citizenship for over 50,000 people residing under these enclaves.

Why was such an agreement needed?

- India and Bangladesh share a 4,096 km land boundary covering West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Mizoram.
- This is the largest among the international boundaries that India shares with its neighbors.
- On this boundary, some 50,000-100,000 people reside in so-called Chitmahals or Indo-Bangladeshi enclaves.
- There are 102 Indian enclaves inside Bangladesh and 71 Bangladeshi ones inside India.
- Inside those enclaves are also 28 counter-enclaves and one counter-counter-enclave, called Dahala Khagrabari.

Inception of the agreement

- For the first time, a vision to solve this issue had been enshrined in the Indira-Mujib pact of 1972.

- Accordingly, the India-Bangladesh LBA was signed between the two countries in 1974.
- However, this agreement need ratification from the parliaments of both countries as it involved the exchange of the territories.
- While Bangladesh had ratified it as back as 1974 only, it was not ratified by the Indian parliament till 2014.
- The 119th Amendment Bill 2013 sought to ratify the land boundary agreement between the two countries.

Key features of the LBA

- The LBA envisages a transfer of 111 Indian enclaves to Bangladesh in return of 51 enclaves to India.
- The area transferred to India is less than that transferred by India to Bangladesh. In totality India incurs a net loss in terms of area occupancy.
- This remained a major concern of opposition from the north-eastern affected states and west Bengal.
- Also, most of the area concerned is occupied by the tribals of the North-Eastern states and hence the swapping takes away their land rights leaving them more vulnerable.
- Current Status of the Constitution (119th Amendment) Bill has been passed by the Parliament of India on 7th May 2015.
- While India will gain 510 acres of land, ten thousand acres of land will notionally go to Bangladesh.
- This legislation will redraw India's boundary with Bangladesh by exchanging enclaves in Assam, West Bengal, Tripura and Meghalaya.

Implications of the Agreement

- It will secure the long-stranded boundary and enable to curb the illegal migration, smuggling and criminal acts cross the border.
- It would help those stateless citizens by granting them citizenship from their respective countries. It would help settle the boundary dispute at several points in Meghalaya, Tripura, Assam, and west Bengal.
- It would improve the access to underdeveloped north-eastern states and would further enhance the developmental works in the region.
- It would help to increase the connectivity with south-east Asia as part of India's North-eastern policy.

2. Centre mulls new testing modes after anaemia surge

- The National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5) reveals the **rise in cases of anaemia across the spectrum of the population**. Anaemia has increased in children, women, pregnant women and men.

Anaemia:

- Anaemia is a condition in which the **number of red blood cells or the haemoglobin concentration within them is lower than normal**. Anaemia leads to **reduced oxygen flow** to the body's organs.
- Anaemia is commonly characterised by **low levels of iron** in the body.
- Anaemia can also be due to a **lack of adequate and quality nutrition** and inadequate intake of fresh fruits and vegetables as well as a deficiency of vitamin B-12.

Governmental initiatives:

- The reduction of anaemia is one of the important objectives of the **POSHAN Abhiyaan**. Complying with the targets of POSHAN Abhiyaan and National Nutrition Strategy set by NITI Aayog, the **Anaemia Mukh Bharat** strategy has been designed to reduce the prevalence of anaemia by 3 percentage points per year among children, adolescents and women in the reproductive age group (15–49 years), between the year 2018 and 2022.
- Anaemia Mukh Bharat (Anaemia-free India) aims to reduce the proportion of anaemia among children to 40%, pregnant women to 32% and lactating women to 40% by 2022.

3. NFHS says women outnumber men

- Fifth edition of the National Family Health Survey.

Background:

National Family Health Survey-5:

- The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a **representative sample of households throughout**

India. Compared to the decadal Census, the NFHS surveys are smaller in terms of surveyed households.

- The survey provides state and national information for India on fertility, infant and child mortality, the practice of family planning, maternal and child health, reproductive health, nutrition, anaemia, utilization and quality of health and family planning services.
- NFHS has had two specific goals: a) to **provide essential data on health and family welfare** needed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and other agencies for policy and programme purposes, and b) to provide **information on important emerging health and family welfare issues.**

Details:

Improved sex ratio and child sex ratio:

- For the first time since the NFHS surveys, the proportion of women exceeded men: there were **1,020 women for 1,000 men (average value)**.
 - The NFHS-4 noted there were 991 women for every 1,000 men.
- The **sex ratio at birth** for children born in the past five years has improved from 919 per 1,000 males in 2015-16 to **929 per 1,000**.
- Thus the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5 confirms **signs of a demographic shift in India.**

Decreasing TFR:

- The NFHS data also show that India is on its way to stabilising its population, with **most States and UTs having a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of less than two**.
 - A TFR of less than **2.1 (Replacement TFR)** suggests an eventual decline in population over time.
- While some states like Bihar, Meghalaya, Manipur, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh continue to have a TFR above two, the TFR in all these States has improved in the last five years.

Population levels:

- Despite the decreasing TFR, India is still poised to be the most populous country in the world, with the current projection by the United Nations population division forecasting that **India's population will peak at 1.6 billion to 1.8 billion from 2040 to 2050.**
- The Union government's report projects India overtaking China as the world's most populous country around 2031.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

4. India, while moving to renewable energy needs to focus on sustainable well-being

With current per capita emissions that are less than half the global average, India's pledge to reach 'net zero' emissions by 2070 has cemented India's credentials as a global leader.

Implication of net-zero by 2070

- The political implication of the date 2070 is that the world **should get to 'net-zero' by 2050.**
- For that, the rich countries will need to do more and step up closer to their share of the carbon budget.
- India's stand also signals that **it will not act under external pressure**, as requiring equal treatment is the hallmark of a global power, and will have an impact on other issues.

How focus on coal harms developing countries

- The subject of oil was not touched at COP26, even as **automobile emissions are the fastest growing emissions**, because it is a defining feature of western civilisation.
- **Most abundant source of energy:** Coal is the most abundant energy source, essential for base load in electrification, and the production of steel and cement.
- Its use declines after the **saturation level of infrastructure** is reached.
- **Declining role of G-7 in rule setting:** That India and China working together forced the G7 to make a retraction has signalled the coming of a world order in which the G7 **no longer sets the rules.**
- **Specific language on finance and adaptation:** After 40 years there is more specific language on both finance and adaptation finally recognising that costs and near-term effects of climate change will hit the poorest countries hardest.

Feasibility of the goal of 'net-zero' by 2070

- Seeing the challenge in terms of the scale and the speed of the transformation of the energy system assumes that India will follow the pathway of western civilisation.
- **Transition to electrification:** India is urbanising as it is industrialising, **moving directly to electrification**, renewable energy and electric vehicles, and a digital economy instead of a focus on the internal combustion engine.
- Most of the **infrastructure required has still to be built** and automobiles are yet to be bought.
- **Investment vs. incurring cost:** India will not be replacing current systems and will be making investments, not incurring costs.

Challenge for the West

- The consumption of affluent households both determines and accelerates an increase of emissions of carbon dioxide.
- This is followed by socio-economic factors such as **mobility and dwelling size**.
- In the West, these drivers have overridden the beneficial effects of changes in technology reflected in the material footprint and related greenhouse-gas emissions.
- The West has yet to come out with a clear strategy of how it will remain within the broad contours of its carbon budget.
- And **increasing inequality and a rise of protectionism** and trade barriers imposing new standards need to be anticipated.
- This knowledge is essential for national policy as well as the next round of climate negotiations.

Way forward for India

- Climate change has to be addressed by the West by reducing consumption, not just greening it.
- **Shifting the consumption pattern:** Consumption patterns need to be '**shifted away from resource** and carbon-intensive goods and services, e.g. mobility from cars and aircraft to buses and trains.
- **Reducing the carbon intensity:** Along with 'reducing demand, resource and carbon intensity of consumption has to decrease, e.g. expanding renewable energy, electrifying cars and public transport and increasing energy and material efficiency'.
- **Equal distribution of wealth and affordable energy use:** Equally important, will be achieving a 'more equal distribution of wealth with a minimum level

of prosperity and affordable energy use for all', e.g., housing and doing away with biomass for cooking.

- **Focused research group:** The Government now needs to set up **focused research groups** for the conceptual frame of sustainable well-being.
- It should analyse the drivers of affluent overconsumption and circulate synthesis of the literature identifying reforms of the economic systems as well as studies that show how much energy we really need for a decent level of well-being.

Role for legislature

- **Fundamental duty:** After the Stockholm Declaration on the Global Environment, the Constitution was amended in 1976 to include Protection and Improvement of Environment as a fundamental duty.
- **Use of provision under Article 253:** Parliament used Article 253 to enact the Environment Protection Act to implement the decisions reached at the Stockholm Conference.
- **Enabling new set of legislation:** The decisions at COP26 enable a new set of legislation around ecological limits, energy and land use, including the efficient distribution and use of electricity, urban design and a statistical system providing inputs for sustainable well-being.

Conclusion

For India, in parallel with the infrastructure and clean technology thrust, the focus on a decent living standard leads to behavioural change in the end-use service, such as mobility, shelter and nutrition – for change modifying wasteful trends.

5. Is the crypto asset boom sustainable?

Retail investors have shown significant interest in Cryptocurrencies which as of now are unregulated. The Centre has announced that it would introduce a new bill in the Winter Session of Parliament to bring these under regulation. This has brought back the debate on whether cryptocurrencies are a bubble or their rise is truly unstoppable.

Value of cryptocurrencies

- Traditionally, gold was an asset that was used to hedge inflation and against any risks in the financial system. It was used as a store of value. Cryptocurrency is another such asset outside the financial system which has offered higher returns than gold.

- The primary advantage of bitcoins is that their supply is limited based on the mathematically designed blockchain network. Hence, they are a better alternative to gold as a hedge against inflation.
- Cryptocurrencies are an asset class with many systems and processes built on the blockchain network such as decentralized finance systems. Transaction costs can be reduced in the long run.
- However, critics argue that the current valuations are not based on the true value of the assets and hence they call it a bubble.

Do cryptocurrencies have real-world value?

- According to one school of thought, Blockchain is being used around the world to better record-keeping and track asset transactions. Due to the high volatility in price, the use of cryptocurrencies for buying and selling goods and services has been limited. It is primarily being used for hedging investments. Governments do not accept taxes in the form of Bitcoin for example. As seen in the case of demonetization, investors have been sceptical of assets whose value can be wiped off by government orders. Bitcoin, being outside the financial system, is seen as a hedge against such system-wide actions and secure the investments better.
- On the other hand, there are businesses that accept Bitcoin for transactions, and many countries are adopting cryptocurrencies for monetary and financial transactions. With easy money policy followed by Central Banks around the world in the form of Quantitative Easing, the value of money has been decreasing significantly. The most important value of Bitcoin is that it is a great store of wealth and savings in it cannot be eroded by creating more and more money at the will of the government.

Risk of Government Sanctions

- Bitcoin is a revolutionary technology that has seen significant adoption. There are developments around the world in the areas of decentralized finance, NFTs and augmented reality. Banning them would lead to denial of access to significant advancements in technology.
- A ban on cryptocurrencies might be counterproductive as it will push the ecosystem underground and it would be wrong to ban crypto assets unless there are compelling reasons. A better policy would be to have a regulatory system in place and allow investments like any asset class. It will also ease the adoption of blockchain and take advantage of the technology in financial record keeping.
- The appeal of the private crypto networks arises from their decentralized nature and a government monopoly over the record-keeping system might not generate much interest.

Benefits of competition among different currencies

- Private currencies could have a beneficial effect in disciplining the central bank. The action in Zimbabwe is a case in point. Printing of excess money led to the loss of value of currency and people moved to the US dollar for transactions. This had a disciplinary effect by forcing the Zimbabwean government to ensure monetary reforms and curtail the supply.
- This was also raised by famous economist Milton Friedman who held that monopoly is considered counterproductive in most cases but monopoly power of the central bank is taken for granted without questioning it.
- Research suggests that private currencies that have a scarce supply would perform as a competing payment instrument and discipline the central bank. An analysis of which currency performs what functions can be undertaken to harness all these instruments within the financial system rather than cracking down on them.
- It would also help to curtail the political decisions on the part of the government to spend more than the supply of funds by printing more money.

6. Russia puts into orbit classified military satellite

- Russia has successfully placed into orbit a military satellite believed to be part of its early warning anti-missile system.
- The Soyuz rocket carried what is believed to be a **Tundra satellite**, part of **Russia's missile warning system named Kupol or dome**.
 - Kupol is designed to detect launches of ballistic missiles and track them to their landing site.
 - The system has been designed as a replacement for the current system of early warning satellites called Oko.

1. Australia's controversial Religious Discrimination Bill

Australian PM Scott Morrison has introduced a contentious piece of anti-discrimination legislation called the "Religious Discrimination Bill" in their parliament.

What is the Bill about?

- The bill aims to eliminate discrimination on the ground of religious beliefs or activities.
- It will ensure Australians are protected from discrimination on the basis of religious belief or activity.
- The timing of the introduction of this bill, ahead of the federal elections is being seen as an attempt by the Morrison government to target religious voters.

What does the Religious Discrimination Bill say?

- The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of religious belief or activity in a range of areas of life including work, education, access to premises, and the provision of goods, services, and accommodation.
- Discrimination is unlawful if it occurs, for example, because of a religious belief or activity that the person holds or engages in.
- It is also unlawful if it occurs because of the person's association with someone else who holds or engages in a religious belief or activity, regardless of whether or not they themselves hold or engage in a religious belief or activity.

Contentious provisions

- The bill also allows faith-based organizations such as religious schools to hire and enrol people from particular faiths.
- The bill states that religious bodies can give preference, "in good faith, to persons who hold or engage in a particular religious belief or activity".

- It goes on to say that a religious body does not discriminate against a person under this Act by engaging, in good faith, in conduct that a person of the same religion as the religious body could reasonably consider.

Because of this clause, the bill has alarmed some LGBTQI groups and some legal experts who say that the bill will discriminate against gay teachers and students.

Criticisms

- Some critics of the bill see it as a piece of legislation that is legalizing hate.
- Some are questioning the government and asking for proof that people are discriminated against on the basis of religion in the country.
- Further, there are also demands to protect gay students from discrimination.

2. Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

Summary findings from **the fifth edition of the National Family Health Survey**, released recently showed a **12.3 percentage point increase over the previous edition of the survey** in the coverage of health insurance to 41% of households surveyed, an indication of the impact of the government's flagship **the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)**, that was launched in September 2018.

Key Features of PM-JAY:

1. The world's largest **health insurance/** assurance scheme fully financed by the government.
2. It provides cover of 5 lakhs per family per year, for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization across public and private empaneled hospitals in India.
3. Coverage: Over 10.74 crore poor and vulnerable entitled families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) are eligible for these benefits.
4. Provides cashless access to health care services for the beneficiary at the point of service.
5. **The National Health Authority (NHA)** is the nodal agency responsible for the nationwide roll-out and implementation of the AB-PMJAY scheme.
6. This scheme is a **Centrally sponsored scheme with some Central sector components.**

Eligibility:

1. No restrictions on family size, age or gender.
2. All pre-existing conditions are covered from day one.
3. Covers up to 3 days of pre-hospitalization and 15 days post-hospitalization expenses such as diagnostics and medicines.
4. Benefits of the scheme are portable across the country.
5. Services include approximately 1,393 procedures covering all the costs related to treatment, including but not limited to drugs, supplies, diagnostic services, physician's fees, room charges, surgeon charges, OT and ICU charges etc.
6. Public hospitals are reimbursed for the **healthcare services** at par with the private hospitals.

As per the latest economic survey:

1. **The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)** contributed to improvement in many health outcomes in States that implemented the programme.
2. States that joined the PM-JAY, compared to those that did not, experienced greater penetration of health insurance, reduction in infant and child mortality rates, realised improved access and utilisation of family planning services and greater awareness of HIV/ AIDS.
3. Across all the States, the proportion of households with health insurance increased by 54% for States that implemented PM-JAY while falling by 10% in States that did not.

3. Interpol

The Interpol has elected **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** Special Director Praveen Sinha as a Delegate for Asia in its **Executive Committee**.

About the Interpol Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee has 13 members from different countries comprising the President of the Interpol, two Vice-Presidents and nine Delegates.

- It supervises the execution of the **Interpol** General Assembly's decisions and the administration and work of its General Secretariat.
- It meets three times a year and sets organisational policy and direction.

What is Interpol?

- The **International Criminal Police Organisation, or Interpol**, is a 194-member intergovernmental organisation.
- **headquartered in** Lyon, France.
- **Formed in 1923** as the International Criminal Police Commission, and started calling itself Interpol in 1956.
- **India joined the organisation in 1949**, and is one of its oldest members.

Interpol's declared global policing goals include:

- Countering terrorism, promoting border integrity worldwide, protection of vulnerable communities, providing a secure cyberspace for people and businesses, curbing illicit markets, supporting environment security, and promoting global integrity.

What is the Interpol General Assembly?

- It is Interpol's supreme governing body, and comprises representatives from all its member countries.
- It meets annually for a session lasting approximately four days, to vote on activities and policy.
- Each country is represented by one or more delegates at the Assembly, who are typically chiefs of law enforcement agencies.
- The Assembly also elects the members of the Interpol Executive Committee, the governing body which "provides guidance and direction in between sessions of the Assembly".

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

4. Finance Ministry backs three-rate GST structure

The Government can rationalize the GST rate structure without losing revenues by rejigging the four major rates of 5%, 12%, 18% and 28% with a three-rate framework of 8%, 15% and 30%, as per a National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) study.

GST Slabs

- In India, almost 500+ services and over 1300 products fall under the 4 major GST slabs.
- These comprise rates of 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%. The GST Council periodically revises the items under each slab rate to adjust them according to industry demands and market trends.
- The updated structure ensures that the essential items fall under lower tax brackets, while luxury products and services entail higher GST rates.
- The 28% rate is levied on demerit goods such as tobacco products, automobiles, and aerated drinks, along with an additional GST compensation cess.

Why harmonize GST slabs?

- Multiple rate changes since the introduction of the GST regime in July 2017 have brought the effective GST rate to 11.6% from the original revenue-neutral rate of 15.5%.
- Merging the 12% and 18% GST rates into any tax rate lower than 18% may result in revenue loss.
- The nature of rate changes has also meant that over 40% of taxable turnover value now falls in the 18% tax slab, thus any move to dovetail that slab with a lower rate will trigger losses.

What next?

- Restructuring GST rates is a timely idea to improve revenues.
- It is important to sequence the transition to the new rate structure so as to minimize the costs associated with tax compliance, administration, and economic distortions.

5. Cryptocurrencies regulation across the World

The Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021 was listed for introduction in Parliament's Winter Session.

About the Bill

- The bill aims to create a facilitative framework for the creation of the official digital currency to be issued by the Reserve Bank of India".
- It seeks to prohibit all private cryptocurrencies in India, however, it allows for certain exceptions to promote the underlying technology of cryptocurrency and its uses.

How are cryptocurrencies regulated in countries around the world?

The stance of countries and regulators has ranged from:

1. A total ban on these financial assets Ex. China
 2. Allowing them to operate with some regulations
 3. Allowing virtual currency trading in the absence of any guidelines Ex. El Salvador
- Governments and regulators remain divided on how to categorize it as a currency or asset – and how to control it from an operational point of view.
 - The evolution of the policy and regulatory response has been uncharacteristically discordant, with no apparent coordination in the responses of countries.

Among the countries that haven't issued detailed regulations, there are those that have recognized and defined these currencies.

[A] CANADA

- It defines virtual currency under its Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Regulations, as:

(a) a digital representation of value that can be used for payment or investment purposes that is not a fiat currency and that can be readily exchanged for funds or for another virtual currency that can be readily exchanged for funds; or

(b) a private key of a cryptographic system that enables a person or entity to have access to a digital representation of value referred to in paragraph (a).

- The Canada Revenue Authority (CRA) generally treats cryptocurrency as a commodity for purposes of the country's Income Tax Act.

[B] ISRAEL

- Israel in its Supervision of Financial Services Law includes virtual currencies in the definition of financial assets.
- The Israeli securities regulator has ruled that cryptocurrency is a security subject, while the Israel Tax Authority defines cryptocurrency as an asset and demands 25% on capital gains.

[C] GERMANY

- In Germany, the Financial Supervisory Authority qualifies virtual currencies as "units of account" and therefore, "financial instruments".
- It considers Bitcoin to be a crypto token given that it does not fulfill typical functions of a currency.
- However, citizens and legal entities can buy or trade crypto assets as long as they do it through exchanges and custodians licensed with the German Federal Financial Supervisory Authority.

[D] UNITED KINGDOM

- In the UK, Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs, do not consider crypto assets to be currency or money.
- It further notes that cryptocurrencies have a unique identity and cannot, therefore, be directly compared to any other form of investment activity or payment mechanism.

[E] UNITED STATES

- In US different states have different definitions and regulations for cryptocurrencies.
- While the federal government does not recognize cryptocurrencies as legal tender, definitions issued by the states recognize the decentralized nature of virtual currencies.

[F] THAILAND

- In Thailand, digital asset businesses are required to apply for a license, monitor for unfair trading practices, and are considered "financial institutions" for anti-money laundering purposes.

Conclusion

- While most of these countries do not recognize cryptocurrencies as legal tender, they do recognize the value these digital units represent.
- Almost all countries consider their functions as either a medium of exchange, unit of account, or a store of value (any asset that would normally retain purchasing power into the future).
- Like India, several other countries have moved to launch a digital currency backed by their central bank.

6. Green Bonds:

State Bank of India, the country's largest commercial bank, has dual listed its \$650 million **green bonds** simultaneously on the India International Exchange (India INX) and Luxembourg Stock Exchange (LuxSE). This dual listing is in line with this year's topic of World Investor Week, 'Sustainable Finance', as indicated by the regulatory body **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)**.

What Is a Green Bond?

A green bond is a **type of fixed-income instrument** that is specifically earmarked to raise money for climate and environmental projects.

These bonds are **typically asset-linked and backed by the issuing entity's balance sheet**, so they usually carry the same credit rating as their issuers' other debt obligations.

- Green bonds may come with tax incentives to enhance their attractiveness to investors.
- The **World Bank is a major issuer of green bonds**. It has issued 164 such bonds since 2008, worth a combined \$14.4 billion. In 2020, the total issuance of green bonds was worth almost \$270 billion, according to the **Climate Bond Initiative**.

How Does a Green Bond Work?

Green bonds work **just like any other corporate or government bond**.

- Borrowers issue these securities in order to secure financing for projects that will have a **positive environmental impact**, such as ecosystem restoration or reducing pollution.
- Investors who purchase these bonds can expect to make as the bond matures.
- In addition, **there are often tax benefits** for investing in green bonds.

Green Bonds Vs Blue Bonds:

Blue bonds are sustainability bonds to finance projects that **protect the ocean and related ecosystems**.

- This can include projects to support sustainable fisheries, protection of coral reefs and other fragile ecosystems, or reducing pollution and acidification.
- **All blue bonds are green bonds, but not all green bonds are blue bonds.**

Green Bonds Vs Climate Bonds:

“**Green bonds**” and “**climate bonds**” are sometimes used interchangeably, but some authorities use the latter term specifically for **projects focusing on reducing carbon emissions** or alleviating the effects of climate change.

7. Setting the tone at Glasgow, the job ahead in Delhi

India's pledge to reach 'net zero' emissions by 2070 at CoP26 in Glasgow.

India needs to focus on sustainable well-being amid lofty promises and pledges

- India's per capita emissions are less than 50% of the global average.
- India's commitment to reach 'net zero' emissions by 2070 has cemented India's position as a global leader.
- However, India should not succumb to external or internal pressures to become equal among the unequal emitters.

“Carbon colonialism” and beyond

- Undoubtedly it should be the common goal to limit emissions but the treatment for different nations must also be mindful of historical, geographical, and economic disparities.
- The commitments from the large developing nations like India and China lately has forced influential world groupings such as G7 to make a retraction in goal setting for others.
- Climate justice and financial constraints are like partners which cannot be divorced to achieve much-needed harmony.

Making investments not incurring costs

- To uphold and respect the pledges India will have to make transformational changes at almost every level.
- The western civilization and industrialization pattern has to be relooked for their cost-benefit analysis.
- The expenditures for renewable energy, e-mobility, waste to energy, etc. should be taken as a long-term investment rather than costly affairs for now.

Need vs Greed

- The sustainable development goals categorically vouch for ensuring sustainable production and consumption-based social order.
- We have enough resources to fulfil our needs but not anyone's greed.
- The consumption patterns of the west and also across the globe need to be shifted away from resource and carbon-intensive goods and services from diet to mobility.
- The distribution of wealth and prosperity and affordable energy for all is needed.

Way forward

- While India has always shown the bigger heart in dealing with the issues concerning environmental sustainability and humanity, it must not forget to address the grassroots problems amicably. The constitutional powers and obligations on the society should be adhered to while framing any disrupting legislation or making any commitment, that can affect the lives and dreams of the billions.

Prelims Practice Questions

1. The 'Go Blue' Campaign, recently in news, is associated with which of the following?

- A Promoting inland fisheries
- B Spreading awareness about Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)
- C Spreading awareness about the conservation of marine life
- D Promotion clean beaches

Answer :B

Explanation

- Recently, the Ministry of Animal Husbandry and Dairying has organized a workshop on the National Action Plan to combat Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), while celebrating World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW - November 18-24).
 - During WAAW an International Colour Campaign, 'Go Blue' **campaign, was launched by the AMR tripartite organisations** (World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World organisation for Animal Health) **to help spread awareness about AMR.**
- AMR is the resistance acquired by any microorganism against antimicrobial drugs that are used to treat infections.
 - Microorganisms that develop antimicrobial resistance are sometimes referred to as "superbugs".
 - The WHO has declared AMR as one of the top 10 global health threats.
- **Hence, option B is correct.**

2. With reference to Lithium, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is considered to be the lightest or the least dense metal on earth.
2. It is one of the rare metals.
3. It is highly reactive and flammable, and must be stored in mineral oil.

Options:

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Lithium is considered to be the lightest or one of the least dense metals on earth. It has a density of 0.534 g/cm³. This makes lithium nearly half as dense as water which means lithium would float on the surface of water.
- Like all alkali metals, lithium is highly reactive and flammable, and must be stored in vacuum, inert atmosphere or inert liquid such as purified kerosene or mineral oil.
- Lithium is a comparatively rare element, although it is found in many rocks and some brines, but always in very low concentrations.

3. With reference to Global Nutrition Report, 2021, consider the following statements:

1. There is no country 'on track' to halt the rise in adult obesity or achieve a relative reduction in salt/sodium intake.
2. India has made significant progress in anaemia and childhood wasting.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A 1 only
- B 2 only
- C Both 1 and 2
- D Neither 1 nor 2

Answer : A

Explanation

- The **Global Nutrition Report** acts as a report card on the world's nutrition – globally, regionally, and country by country – and on efforts to improve it.
- According to the recently released Global Nutrition Report, 2021, **India has made no progress on anaemia and childhood wasting. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
 - Over half of Indian women in the age group 15-49 years are anaemic. There has been a rise in anaemic Indian women since 2016 from 52.6% to 53% in 2020.
 - India is also among 23 countries that have made no progress or are worsening on reducing 'childhood wasting'.

- **Global Nutrition Targets:** At the current rate of progress, the global nutrition targets will not be achieved by 2025 globally and in most countries worldwide.
 - Only seven countries are on track to meet four of the six maternal, infant and young child nutrition targets by 2025, **while no country is 'on track' to halt the rise in adult obesity** or achieve a 30% **relative reduction in salt/sodium intake. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

4. Consider the following statements:

1. It is the smallest of the shallow seas covering the continental shelf of Europe.
2. It is the busiest shipping lane in the world.

The above statements best describe:

- a. English Channel
- b. Gulf of Lion
- c. Strait of Otranto
- d. St George's Channel

Answer: a

Explanation:

- English Channel is one of the smallest of the shallow seas covering the continental shelf of Europe and it is one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world.

5. 'Dosti' is a trilateral coast guard exercise involving -

- A India, Bangladesh and Srilanka
- B India, Srilanka and Maldives
- C Pakistan, Srilanka and Bangladesh
- D India, Bangladesh and Oman

Answer :B

Explanation

- The 15th edition of the biennial **trilateral coast guard exercise ‘Dosti’ involving India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka** was recently concluded.
- The year 2021 marks 30 years since these exercises were first launched.
- **Hence, option B is correct.**

6. India’s Strategic crude oil storages are located in which of the following places?

1. Mumbai
2. Mangalore
3. Chennai
4. Visakhapatnam
5. Padur

Options:

- a. 1, 2 and 3 only
- b. 2, 4 and 5 only
- c. 1, 3, 4 and 5 only
- d. 2, 3, 4 and 5 only

Answer: b

Explanation:

- India’s Strategic crude oil storages are located in Mangalore, Visakhapatnam and Padur. India stores 5.33 Million tonnes of crude oil in these reserves.

Mains Practice Questions

1. Citizen’s Charter seeks to continuously improve the quality of public services for the people so as to respond to their needs and wishes. In the light of the statement discuss the foundational features of a citizen’s charter and what do citizens expect out of it.

Approach

- Start the answer by defining the concept of the Citizen's Charter
- Discuss the foundational features of a citizen's charter and what do citizens expect out of it.
- Conclude suitably.

2. Farmer producer organizations have the potential to act as a solution to agrarian distress. Comment.

Approach

- Start the answer by defining the concept of Farmer Producer Organizations.
- Discuss the role of FPOs in dealing with agrarian distress.
- Conclude suitably.

